

## ISSUE SUMMARY:

## UPCOMING MILESTONES:

- (b) (5)

- The Evidence Act was bipartisan legislation championed by Senator Patty Murray and former House Speaker Paul Ryan and signed by President Trump on January 14, 2019. The law implements half of the recommendations from the bipartisan U.S. Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking report [The Promise of Evidence Based Policy Making](#). Provisions of the law include the following agency requirements:
  - Title I, Federal Evidence-Building Activities: (1) develop and issue a Learning Agenda (i.e. evidence-building plan) and Capacity Assessment as part of the 4-Year Strategic Plan; (2) publish an Annual Agency Evaluation Plan; (3) designate an Evaluation Officer and Statistical Official.
  - Title II, Government Data Act: (1) issue a Strategic Information Resources Management Plan and conduct a Comprehensive Data Inventory and (2) designate a Chief Data Officer.
  - Title III, Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act: (1) meet confidential information protection requirements and (2) make data assets available, as practicable, to any statistical agency and external researchers.
- The Agency submitted an Interim Learning Agenda to OMB as required in September 2020. It focuses on the following three Learning Priorities: workforce planning; drinking water systems out of compliance; and grant commitments met.

- The Agency submitted an Interim Capacity Assessment to OMB as required in September 2020. It provides EPA-specific context and the planned approach for the final assessment.
- EPA's Evidence Act Workgroup is a standing advisory body co-chaired by the three designated Evidence Act officials to provide leadership and coordination and to promote consistency and quality in agency implementation activities and deliverables. All Headquarters offices and key Lead Regions are represented.
- The Evidence Act specifically advances program evaluation as an essential component of Federal evidence building. Agencies are expected to follow OMB guidance outlining program evaluation standards in developing and implementing evaluation activities, evaluation policies, and in hiring and retaining qualified staff.

#### KEY EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS:

*Please check which stakeholder(s) are likely to reach out to the incoming political team about this issue*

- ☐ Congress    ☐ Industry    ☒ States    ☒ Tribes    ☐ Media    ☒ Other Federal Agency  
☒ NGO    ☐ Other (name of stakeholder) \_\_\_\_\_

*Please describe key concern(s):*

- Several OMB offices are highly involved in the implementation of the Evidence Act; they have been actively engaging EPA on questions about the implementation of, and deliverables for, the Evidence Act.
- Several national think tanks, academic institutions, and associations follow federal Evidence Act implementation closely, including Results for America, The Data Coalition and the Partnership for Public Service, among others.
- To develop the Interim Learning Agenda, EPA officials engaged with relevant external experts and stakeholders, especially with states and tribes, to formulate priority questions and to plan and implement the activities designed to answer them.

#### MOVING FORWARD:

- Led by OCFO, the Evidence Act designated officials, along with the Learning Priority leads, can provide a briefing on the Interim Learning Agenda and other deliverables/activities.
- Since most major Evidence Act deliverables in FY 2021 fall under the approach to the Strategic Plan, OCFO and the three designated officials will work with the Administrator's policy team to obtain decisions on the approach and roles for delivering the Final Learning Agenda, Capacity Assessment and Evaluation Plan. OCFO and the designated officials will then engage with the agency and stakeholders to implement the approach.

#### LEAD OFFICE/REGION:

OCFO – Evaluation Officer (Acting)

#### OTHER KEY OFFICES/REGIONS:

OMS –Chief Data Officer; OA/OP –Statistical Official  
 OMS –Workforce Planning learning priority  
 OECA/OW –Drinking water systems out of compliance learning priority  
 OA-OCIR/Region 9 – Grant commitments met learning priority